

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 PA-03 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR CASC UR US

SUBJ: EMBASSY NOTE PROTESTING DETENTION OF AP CORRESPONDENT

REF: MOSCOW 11546

1. BOTH MFA PRESS DIVISION AND USA DIVISION EVADED EMBASSY EFFORTS TO DELIVER TODAY NOTE PROTESTING LEDDINGTON DETENTION (REFTEL). WE WILL DELIVER NOTE TO USA DIVISION MORNING SEPTEMBER 25. TEXT OF NOTE FOLLOWS.

2. QUOTE.. THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA WISHES TO CALL TO ATTENTION OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS TO THE FOLLOWING MATTER.

ON SEPTEMBER 23, 1973, SHORTLY AFTER 10:30 AM, AMERICAN CITIZEN ROGER LEDDINGTON, AN ACCREDITED CORRESPONDENT OF THE MOSCOW BUREAU OF ASSOCIATED PRESS (AP), WAS DETAINED BY A MOSCOW MILITIA MAN IN THE VICINITY OF THE BUILDING OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION, LOCATED ON

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ULITSA STARAYA. THE MILITIA MAN ESCORTED MR. LEDDINGTON

BY THE ARM INTO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE BUILDING, WHERE HE WAS DETAINED FOR APPROXIMATELY ONE AND ONE-HALF HOURS BY UNIFORMED GUARDS. UPON BEING TAKEN INTO THE BUILDING, MR. LEDDINGTON PROMPTLY IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS AN AP CORRESPONDENT, SHOWED HIS PRESS CARD, AND ASKED THAT HE BE PERMITTED IMMEDIATELY TO COMMUNICATE BY TELEPHONE WITH THE AMERICAN EMBASSY. THE UNIFORMED POLICE AT THE BUILDING REFUSED THIS REQUEST AND SUBSEQUENTLY REFUSED OTHER REQUESTS BY MR. LEDDINGTON TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE AMERICAN EMBASSY. THESE OFFICIALS ALSO REFUSED MR. LEDDINGTON'S REQUEST TO COMMUNICATE WITH HIS OFFICE AND HIS FAMILY IN ORDER TO INFORM THEM OF HIS DETENTION. AFTER BEING DETAINED FOR APPROXIMATELY ONE AND ONE-HALF HOURS, MR. LEDDINGTON WAS PHYSICALLY SEIZED BY BOTH A UNIFORMED MILITIAMAN AND AN UNIDENTIFIED MAN IN PLAIN-CLOTHES, AND TWO ROLLS OF FILM WERE FORCIBLY TAKEN FROM HIM. ONE ROLL OF FILM WAS UNUSED, WHILE THE OTHER HAD BEEN USED BY MR. LEDDINGTON IN COVERING A LEGITIMATE NEW STORY.

THE EMBASSY WISHES TO REGISTER A STRONG PROTEST OVER THE TREATMENT ACCORDED MR. LEDDINGTON BY THESE SOVIET OFFICIALS. THIS TREATMENT CONSTITUTES A SERIOUS INFRINGEMENT OF THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF UNITED STATES CORRESPONDENTS ACCREDITED IN THE USSR. FURTHERMORE, THE EMBASSY WISHES TO REMIND THE MINISTRY IN THIS REGARD THAT THE REPEATED DENIAL BY THE UNIFORMED GUARD AT THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE BUILDING OF MR. LEDDINGTON'S REQUESTS TO COM-
.7,8:-53 285# #8 3.?- 6 :9, 585753S A VIOLATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE 12 (1) OF THE CONSULAR CONVENTION WHICH READS:

" THE RECEIVING STATE SHALL IN NO WAY RESTRICT THE ACCESS OF NATIONALS OF THE SENDING STATE TO ITS CONSULAR ESTABLISHMENTS".

THE EMBASSY ALSO PROTESTS THE UNWARRENTED USE OF FORCE AGAINST AN UNRESISTING AMERICAN CITIZEN WHICH OCCURRED WHEN THE MILITIAMAN AND HIS PLAINCLOTHES ASSOCIATE PHYSICALLY SEIZED MR. LEDDINGTON, FORCIBLY REMOVED HIS ARM FROM HIS JACKET POCKET AND CONFISCATED HIS FILM. IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT IN THIS REGARD THAT MR. LEDDINGTON 'S FINAL REQUEST TO COMMUNICATE WITH HIS EMBASSY WAS MADE WHEN THESE OFFICIALS ASKED THAT HE SURRENDER HIS FILM. ALTHOUGH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MR. LEDDINGTON REPLIED THAT WOULD NOT SURRENDER HIS PROPERTY UNTIL HE WAS PERMITTED TO CONTACT HIS EMBASSY, THE REQUEST, TOO, WAS DENIED, AND MR. LEDDINGTON'S PROPERTY WAS THEN SEIZED.

THE EMBASSY HERewith REQUESTS AN EXPLANATION FROM THE MINISTRY FOR THE DETENTION OF MR. LEDDINGTON AND FOR THE REPEATED REFUSAL OF THESE SOVIET OFFICIALS TO PERMIT HIM TO CONTACT HIS CONSULAR ESTABLISHMENT. IT

IS ALSO REQUESTED THAT BOTH ROLLS OF FILM CONFISCATED
FROM MR. LEDDINGTON BE RETURNED TO THE EMBASSY OR TO
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS BUREAU PROMPTLY AND INTACT.//
END QUOTE.
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
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